

THE
PRESENT CORRECTION
AND ^{694.d.10}
REPROOF of SIN,
OR

A Discourse on 2 Jer. 19. vers.

*Thine own Iniquities shall correct thee, & thy Backslideings
shall reprove thee.*

By John Shower

*Hoc sunt peccata Lapsi, quod grando Frugibus, quod turbidum sy-
dus Arboribus, quod Armentis pestilens vastitas, quod Navigiis sive
Tempestas. Cyprian Serm. de Lapsis.*

L O N D O N,

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T O

His much Honoured Friend,

M^r. * * *

S I R,

I Have not adventur'd to displeas you by publishing your Name to the World; wherby you will easily apprehend, that I send you this Discourse as to a Friend, for your impartial Opinion of it; rather than to a Patron for Protection: (the stale Complement of Epistles Dedicatory.) I designed it should have been accompanied with several other Discourses, concerning the Evill of Sin, and its Agravations. First, in relation to the B. Trinity; as it dishonours God, disparageth the Divine Nature, & bespatters every Attribute & Perfection of the Godhead; & consequently strikes at the very being of a God. As it is a Rebellion against his Souverainity; Enmity to his Holiness; a Provocation to his Justice; a Contempt of his Wisdom; an ungratefull Affront to his infinite Goodness; challenging his Almighty Power; giveing the Lye to his invariable Truth; slighting his Omniscience; wearying his Patience; &c. as it opposeth his Glory, & contra-

dicts his holy Will, & the great design of all his Revelations, Institutions, & Providences. Secondly, with respect to us as it thwarts the end of our Creation, perverts our rational Faculties, and the very principles of our Nature: as it blurs the Image of God upon our Souls; robs us of his Delight & Love; & renders us incapable of any friendly Convers & Communion with him. As it deforms & defiles the Soul; inflaves us to many foolish & hurtfull Lusts; as it gratifies the Devil, & brings us under his power; as it infects others with its contagion; disturbs Societies; is the great Make-bate of the world, and the fatal source of all be Mischiefs and Calamities, under which the Creation groans, and Thirdly, In comparison with all other Evills of Affliction and Punishment: wherby sin will appear to be the most pernicious and intolerable Evill: especially as the cause of the Eternal Ruine of Souls. Where I intended to consider the certainty of that Everlasting Destruction threatned in Holy Scripture to the finally Impenitent. A Doctrine which so many would feign persuade themselv's to doubt of. I cannot wonder at it, since Intrest and Inclination are instead of Evidence in other cases as well as this: men are loath to admit any such Premises, whose Conclusion would ingage them to change their cours of Life: it is not therfore strange if after haveing forfeited the Blessedness of Heaven, they endeavor to extinguish the flames of Hell. But being at present diverted from finishing what I began in that kind, I am desired to let this be publisht alone. I have not bespoke the Readers candor, as is usual, by representing in a Preface the seasonableness & usefullness of the Argument

ment treated of ; because both are sufficiently obvious.

There is hardly any man whose Experience & observation will not oblige him to acknowledg, that Sin doth very often correct & reprove the sinner in this world. The Evidence is too sadly notorious to be denyed, in the miserable Catastrophe of Apostats, in the afflictive consequences of great Transgressions, & in the ordinary fruits of Lust & Folly, Lewdness, & Passion, Intemperance & unrighteousness, & a disorderly Life. Nevertheless, thro the deceitfullness of Sin, & the subtilty of the Tempter, the neglect of Consideration, the powerfull Influence of bad Company, and sometimes the Righteous Judgment of God, (suffering men to harden themselv's in their wickedness) the far greater part will not receive Instruction by this voice of the Rod ; but turn the deaf Ear to all the Calls of God ; & will not be reclaim'd, by all the methods of his Grace, to bring them to Repentance.

SIR, by the following account that is given of it, you will be furnisht with abundant matter of Thanksgiving to God : who partly by the early communications of his Grace, and the pious Care of those who had the conduct of your younger years ; & partly by the kindness of his Providence, in keeping you at a distance from Temptations ; & by your own vigilance & prudent Caution in places & seasons of Danger ; hath preserved you from those Vices, which are thus attended with Temporal sufferings. Such an Improvement of this Discours should be made by all those happy Persons, who cannot confirm

this sad Truth by their own Experience, save in very few & the leſſ considerable Inſtances of it.

The beſt men may reap this Benefit by peruſing it : that the conſideration of the mighty Prevalence & Growth of wickedneſſ, with the preſent bitter fruits of it, may promote their being crucified to this World, and willingneſſ to quit it, aſſoon as God ſhall pleaſe : & ſo diſpoſe them to deſire & wait to be tranſlated to a better ſtate ; where they ſhall neither Sin, nor feel the ſmart of Sin any more for ever ; or be greiv'd & ſadned by the ſins or Sufferings of other men.

In this Life our corrupted Nature is not perfectly healed, but doth ever & anon caſt forth Mire & Dirt. Tho we are dyeing dayly unto Sin, & long for the funeral of the old man ; t' is not quite Dead ; neither will it intirely be ſo, till our own Diſſolution : on which account the Deceitfullneſſ & deſperate Wickedneſſ of the heart diſcovers it ſelf in an hour of Temptation. So that ſome of thoſe, who were thought to be Eſtabliſht & Confirmed Chriſtians, have diſhonor'd the name of God by ſcandalous Backſlideings, diſcredited their profeſſion, falſified their moſt ſolemn vows and obligations, hardened the hearts of ſome, & weakened the hands of others, and ſhamefully diſparaged the Religion of our B. Saviour. Whereupon God teſtifies his diſpleaſure by inward and ſometimes outward Troubles : a terrified Conſcience writes bitter things againſt them ; or God denies the aids of his Grace, after ſuch a forfeiture ; and their minds are darkn'd, their hearts hardened by degrees, & they become careleſſ and remiſſ in the

Mat-

Matters of Religion, & continue in their security ; till by a severe Providence, or a more than ordinary Grace, they are awaken'd to consider their ways, and remember whence they have fallen, & Repent ; & thereby recover his lost favor, & God restores the Joy of his Salvation.

But this, Sir, is our Encouragement, & ought to be argumentative to continued watchfullness, & the utmost endeavors to persevere, that if we are faithfull to the Death, (which may be nearer then we are aware) we shall then enter into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, & Sin no more. We shall no more provoke him to Anger, by our Apostacy ; or suffer his correcting Rebukes for our Backslideings. We shall no more be exposed to Temptation ; or seduced by Satan, to defile our Consciences, to destroy the Peace of our minds, & greive the H. Spirit of God. We shall no more start aside like a broken Bow, & violate our holy promises & Resolutions. Ignorance shall no longer darken our minds, or unmortified Lust lay lurking in the Heart, or the Body any more betray the soul by unruly passions to the Commission of Folly. And as the blessed Consequent of a sinless state, no sorrow shall ever more be felt, and therefore no complaint ever more be heard. Oh that thy thoughts were more delightfull & more connatural to us ! This should be the highest of our Wishes, and the object of our most deliberate & Resolved Choice ; to be made more partakers of the Divine Life ; & to glorify God by a more perfect conformity to his holy Image. I most heartily beseech the great Sanctifier & Lover of souls to effect it more & more on
the

the my own heart & yours. And tho one Kingdom do not hold
us, & I may never see your Face on Earth againe; yet before
that glorious Everlasting Kingdom we expect, (when by seeing
God, we shall be changed into his likeness,) we may dayly meet
at the Throne of Grace; & there I humbly beg you would be
my Remembrancer, as I promise to be yours. I most affectionate-
ly kisse your hands, & remaine

S I R,

Your most Obedient
Humble Servant

John Shower

THE
PRESENT CORRECTION
AND
REPROOF of SIN.

From 2 J E R. 19. former part.

*For thine own wickedness shall correct thee, & thy Backslidings
shall reprove thee.*

THese words may be considered in relation to the *Jews*, and their causless revolt from the worship of the true *God*, and obedience to him. In the preceding verses *God* acquits himself from the imputation of having ever given them or their *Fathers* any just occasion for such an Apostacy. *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vaine.* And then upbraids them with their ingratitude and folly, in the following verses. *Hath any nation changed their Gods which yet are no Gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonisht, ô ye Heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, for my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountaine of liveing waters, and bewed them out*

Verf. 5.
V. 11.
12, 13.

A cisterns,

V. 14.
17.

cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no waters. Therupon God charges them as the authors of their own ruine, as haveing brought upon themselves the calamities under which they smarted. *Is Israel a servant? is he an homeborn slave? why is he spoiled? Hast thou not procured it unto thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God? In vaine therefore dost thou seek for help to Ægypt, or have recourse unto the King of Assyria: for thou shalt eat of the fruit of thine own ways, Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee.*

7 Hof.
15.

instructed

4 Job. 3.

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, or thou shalt be bound and fetterr'd, and held in the chains of thine own sins, as the original word doth sometimes signifie. or rather, thou shalt be instructed and taught by thine own folly, how *evill and bitter a thing it is, to sin against God.* Which is the meaning of the word in other places, and therefore the Septuagint make use of a word in this place which signifies both, to *teach* and to *chasten*.

And thy *backslidings* shall reprove thee, or convince thee by argument and demonstration. The *fruit* of thine *Apostacy* shall convince thee of the *folly* of it: in forsakeing the way of truth for lyeing vanities; the fountaine of living waters, for broken cisterns. The miserable effects & consequences of sin shall correct and reprove thee.

What is here spoken to a *community*, may be as truly asserted of *Individuals*, and particular persons, that the calamities they suffer are the fruits of their own folly; that they

they bring miseries on them selv's in this world; and are ten times severely corrected and chastened by their own wickedness. My present design is, to make it evident that it is so, by showing in several instances, how sinners are reprov'd & punisht by their own sin and folly, even in this Life, as well as in the next. And then I shall improve this argument by some practical inferences, which may be gather'd from it. I shall endeavor to manifest this truth.

1. From the justice and righteousness of God, which doth oftentimes proportion and suit temporal punishments to the sins of men.

2. From the more immediate effects & consequences of Sin, which in this life do ordinarily correct and reprove the sinner.

1. We may consider, how the Justice of God doth oftentimes suit the punishment to the sin even in this Life. This is evident, either on their own persons who were guilty: or on their Relatives & posterity. As to the former, 2 ways. Either when one sin is the punishment of another: or when some calamity is inflicted which is answerable to the sin.

1. God doth sometimes correct sinners in this world, in the punishment of one sin by the permission of more. Which may be either, by their own further sin, or by the sins of other men.

1. God doth sometimes punish former sins, by permitting the offending person to commit more and greater. That this is the severest punishment of sin in this life, may easily

be evinc'd. To be left of God to sin on, & to commit
 more & greater abominations, is a kind of *damnation*,
 were there no other *Hell* to succeed it: for we know the
 the life of the *Prodigal* is dated from his *Repentance*, and
 not from his *birth*: *This my son was dead, but is now alive.*
 And that some of the heathens^s *themselv's* have concluded
 any man to be more worthy of a publick lamentation,
 at the time of his *debauchery*, then of his *death*. Some sins,
 't is true, have almost an inseparable connection & de-
 pendance on each other, as lust follows gluttony, and
 folly drunkenness: but God in righteous judgement may
 leave a man to the power of Temptation, & suffer him
 to encrease the number, and add to the measure of his
 former sins, & so treasure up wrath against the day of
 wrath. Thus he punisht the *wantoness* of Solomon, by per-
 mitting him to fall into *Idolatry*: and the *covetousness* of Ju-
 das; by suffering him to betray his Lord, & Peter's first *denial*
 of Christ, by his *forswearing* him afterward. The *Jews*, for
 killing the *Prophets*, were left of God, to crucifye the
Messiah; and *Israel*, when they committed *whoredoms*
 with the Daughters of Moab, were left to be insnared
 by their *Idolatry*. One sin makes way for more; as the
 Idolatry of the *golden Calf* was ushered by intemperance &
 Idleness: *The people sat down to eat, & drink, and rose up to*
play. Thus waht men get by oppression & acts of inju-
 stice, they oftentimes spend in pride & luxury. The
 wages of unrighteousness, or what they purchas'd by un-
 lawfull

12 Numb.
 1: 2.

32 Ex.

what

lawfull means, is sinfully imploy'd & wasted, and that so quickly sometimes, as if they resolved their *silver and gold* should not tarry to witness against them. God suffers their *treasures of wickedness* to melt away by intemperance & riotous living. Besides when one sin is made a cloak to conceal another, and to hide the shame, or avoid the punishment of one crime, they are suffer'd to commit more: as *Joseph's Brethren*, after their cruelty to him, in selling him into *Ægypt*, they were as unkind & cruel to their aged *Father* in bringing him his bloody coat, in revenge for his particular fondness & affection to their *Brother*. After the commission of any wickedness God may justly leave us to excuse it with a *Lye*. Which is the greatest folly imaginable, as thereby professing that it is better to be really guilty of two faults, then to be thought guilty of one. And then you may proceed farther, to protect that *Lye* by an oath, and at length grow impudent & incorrigible. Therefore fear the beginnings of sin.

2. Sometimes God corrects the sins of one, by the sins of another. *Jacob* the younger son stole his *Father's* blessing by the deceit of his elder *Brothers* garment: and not long after his *Father* in *Law Laban*, by a like fraud gives him *Leah* instead of *Rachel*, substitutes the elder sister in the room of the younger, whom he loved, and served an apprenticeship for. God by the faults of other-

Genes. 27.
29.

by *Absolon's* open incest, in laying with his Father's concubines: & by the lust of his son *Ammon* towards his sister *Tamar*. And when *David* neglected to execute justice on *Ammon* for that offence, *Absolon* unjustly slew him. *David's* treachery against *Uriah* was requited by the treason of his Son, and the rebellion of his own subjects, who joyn'd in conspiracy with him against his Father. Thus God employed the ambition of the King of *Moab* to punish the Idolatry of *Israel*, & they became slaves for eighteen years to that people, with whose Idolatrous customs they had wickedly complied. Thus those who were disobedient to their Parents are oftentimes punished by the undutifullness of their own children. Unfaithfull servants may meet with some hereafter who will be so to them.

3 Jud. 9.
14.

2. God doth oftentimes in this world inflict some calamity that is suitable to the crime, and in some respect or other carries the resemblance of it. And the Justice of God is more especially visible in the likeness & proportion between the sin and the punishment in these four respects. 1. In the kind and quality. 2. In the quality and measure. 3. As to the time. 4. As to the place.

1. The kind and quality of the temporal punishment is oftentimes suited to the kind and quality of the sin. As men sow, so they reap, and to every seed its own body. They plow wickedness, and sow iniquity, & reap a punishment that is adapted to the sin. They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind,

8 Hof. 3.

wind, as the Prophet speaks. *The Backslider in heart shall* ^{14 Prov. 14.}
be filled with his own ways. And the foolish sinner eat
the fruit of his own doings, and be filled with his own counsells. ^{23 Numb. 32.}
 And their calamity be so remarkable, that *their sin shall*
find them out.

There are some peculiar punishments that ordinarily attend some sort of crimes: that follow the guilty persons almost as constantly as giddiness doth a drunkard, as that the spoiler shall be spoiled, he that defrauds others, shall be outwitted, the Lyar shall loose his credit: the censorious talebearer be blasted in his reputation, the oppressor be brought low: the proud be scorned, and despis'd: and he that stops his ears against the cry of the poor, shall want a friend to succour him in distresse, shall cry himself and not be heard. That he that judgeth shall be judged: the slanderer be evil spoken of: that he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword: and that the Murderer shall not live out half his days. If Jacob deceive his old Father Isaac, by the borrow'd garments of his Brother Esau; his own children, when he is old impose upon him by the bloody garment of his beloved Joseph. Abimelech slew seventy of his Brethren, on one stone, and he himself was slaine by a piece of a mill-stone. God sometimes observes even an arithmetick proportion, demands, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: gives blood for blood, and burning for burning.* We have a pertinent example in *Adonibezek, who had his Thumbs and* ^{6 Jud. 9. 5: 6.}
great ^{1 Jud. 9. 6.}

great Toes cutt off. And in the next verse he owns that he had served seventy Kings in the like manner. He was so affected with the equity and justice of his punishment, that he cries out, *As I have done, so hath the Lord required* ^{1 Ex 25.} *me.* ^{12. C. 23.} *Pharaoh* resolves to destroy the male infants of the *Israelites*, and the firstborn in every family of the *Egyptians* was cutt off in a night. He gives order to the mid-wives that they should be drown'd, and he and his mighty host perisht in the waters. *Joseph's Brethren* sold him into *Ægypt*, that his dream concerning *their sheaves bowing down to his*, might not be accomplisht, and that was the very means to bring it about. The Jews crucified the son of God, that the Romans might not come, & take away their Land: and as the punishment of that crime, God sends the *Romans* to destroy their Temple, citty, and Nation. *Jeroboam* thought to prevent the revolt of *Israel* to the *King of Judah*, by erecting calves in *Dan* and *Bethel*, near to *Sechem*, (where the *Samaritans* had their Temple, and where *Abraham* built an altar) and forbidding the people to goe up to *Jerusalem* to worship, and by that wretched policy he and his posterity lost the government of *Israel*. The captivity of *Israel* for seventy years was the punishment God inflicted for their prophaning the seventh day Sabbath, and not suffering their Lands to rest every seventh year. The unnatural lust of the *Sodomites*, we read was punished by fire ^{19 Gen.} from Heaven. The punishment is in such cases the very

eccho

echo of the sin that brought it: Which honours the Justice of God, & renders it conspicuous to all observers. If *Abson* take a pride in his *hair*, his destruction shall come by that means. If *Nadab* & *Abihu* offer *strange fire* to the Lord, by fire shall they be consum'd: as *face answers to Face*, so doth the punishment to the impiety, that brought it. If *David* glory in the numbers of his men of war; *seventy thousand* shall be swept away by a pestilence, to diminish the number: that he may see cause of humiliation in the matter of his pride. Because *Solomon* served God with a *divided heart*, his Kingdom shall be divided, & but a part of it descend to his posterity. Because the *Israelites* served *strange Gods* in their own land, God threatens that other Lords should have dominion over them, & they should serve strangers, in a land that was not their own. Thus some herbs bear the marks of those parts of the body, to which, if ill affected, they are medicinal; so doth the punishment & the calamity oftentimes describe the sin for which God sends it. The sinners Temporal Crosse is formed as it were out of that forbidden Tree wherby he offended, or rather like the crosse of Christ, carries on it in capital Letters an account of the crime, for which he suffers. Tho many of God's judgments, I confess, are of a great depth, past our sounding, as to the grounds & reasons of them, yet in several of them his Righteousness is as the great Mountains, i. e. visible & apparent to the dullest eye.

2. There is sometimes a Suitableness in respect of the quantity & the measure. He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, & he that soweth plentifully, so doth he reap. which is true of evil actions as well as good: Impudent & extraordinary sinners have been signalized by as remarkable judgments & plagues from Heaven. God lays judgment to the line, & equity to the Ballance, rewards them according to their works, & measureth out their calamities & sorrows in proportion to their sins. Tho sentence be not allways speedily executed against great offenders,

2 Sam.
18: 9.

10 Levitic.

1 Kings.
11: 30.

36 Ps. &

ders, & sometimes not at all in this world, but they are bound over to the last *Great Assize* in the world to come: yet in all ages divine justice gives some instances how notorious & exemplary sinners have had as extraordinary punishments.

3. There is frequently a proportion & resemblance between the sin & the Punishment in respect of *Time*. In that very hour, when *Belshazar* was quaffing & carousing in the vessels of the Temple, with his Princes, his Wives, & Concubines; & praying the Gods of gold & silver, the hand of the Lord was against him, & he saw his Doom written on the wall; which made his countenance fall, & his Thoughts tremble, & the joints of his loyns were loosed, & his knees smote one against an other. When *Benhadad the Syrian*, with the 32 Kings with him, were drinking themselves drunk in the Pavilions, the young men of the Princes of the Provinces of *Samaria*, came out against them, & slew every man his man, &c. *Jonah* is pursued by a *Tempest*, at that very Time, when he fled from the Commandment of God. Many who have been going out of God's way, have been arrested & seized by some strange rebuke of divine Providence: wherein the Circumstance of *Time* hath been peculiarly remarkable.

God sent the Prophet *Jonah* to *Ninive*, that exceeding great City, of three days journey, to deliver his terrible message to that People: but he disobey'd his voice, & fled to *Tarshish*. For which God condemned him to be three days a Prisoner in the belly of a great Fish. The word *whale* is not in the original Hebrew, or septuagint Greek.

The Jewish captivity for seventy years in *Babylon*, is attributed to the prophanation of the *Sabbath*, as one principal provoking cause, as will appear by comparing the following Scriptures, 2 *Cron.* 36. c. 17. — 22. v. 13. *Nehem.* 18: 17. *Jerem.* 27: 22. *Ezek.* 26. & 23. c. 38: 46. 't was at the time of the *Passover*, that the *Jews* put to death the Lord of Glory; & after.

7 Dan.
3-6.

Himself.

1 Kings.
20. c. 16:
19. v.

3 Jon. 3:
1 c. 3. v.

afterward about the same time of the year, *the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost* for that sin: their Temple, City, & Nation were destroy'd by the Romans. Nebucadne-
 -zar was admonisht of his *Pride*, & warn'd of that Judgment which afterwards befell him: And as the Punishment in its kind was proportioned to his sin, (his Brutish condition being a suitable Rebuke for his insolence & vain glory,) the Time also of the execution of that Judgment is observable; it was just a *twelve moneth* from Daniel's interpretation of his dream concerning it, & took effect while the proud words were in his mouth, *Is not this great Babilon that I have built, by the might of my power, & for the honour of my majesty?* So in the case of Herod: & of the *Israelites*, in the case of the *molten calf*. Your own reading & observation may furnish you with examples of Blasphemers, Swearers, Lyars, Murderers, & Sabbath-
 -breakers &c. who have been either punisht in the act; or have been follow'd by some perticular judgment afterwards, at the same time of the year, the same day of the moneth, or week, or hour of the day, when they committed the sin. So that the very season of their calamity, hath brought the sin to re-
 -membrance for which they suffered. Several Villages, Towns, & Cities, have been taken notice of, to have suffered greatly by *Fires, which broke out on the Lordsday*, that were before observed & talk't of as infamous for the *prophanation* of the Sabbath, more then other places, & some of them forward-
 -ned of such Judgments for that very Sin.

4. Oftentimes they meet with some Rebuke & Punishment in the *same Place*, where they commit their folly. As in that very house where *Rahab* hid the *Hebrew spies*, she & her kindred were afterward preserved, as the Reward of her Faith: So di-
 -vine Judgment doth frequently overtake men, in the very place where they acted their Wickedness. *Nadab & Abihu* are destroyed by Fire from Heaven *before the Lord*, where they of-
 -fered

4 Dan.
 29: 30:
 31. v.
 12 Acts.
 32 Exod.

10 Levit.
 1: 1.

-fered strange fire, & they are said to dye *before the Lord*. How
 often doth the Drunkard get his death in the same house,
 where he drank to Excess, by causless quarrelling? And the
 Adulterer looses his Life in the same room, where he commit-
 -ted Folly? *Ahab*, by the advice of *Jezabel*, murders Inno-
 -cent *Naboth*, & his sons: but the Lord had said, that *in the*
 same place, where Dogs lick the blood of *Naboth*, shall Dogs lick
 thy Blood, even thine. Which was not long after exactly full
 filled, in a Place of the same nature. A publick & common
 place, within the Territory of *Samaria*, but because of his Hu-
 -miliation, it was more literally & expressly accomplit in the
 death of his son *Joram*. Who was slaine by *Jehu*, & cast into the
 same plat of ground, to remaine unburied, as a prey for Dogs,
 according to the word of the Lord. And of *Jezabel*, for the same
 crime, spake the Lord, saying, *The Dogs shall eat Jezabell, by*
 the wall of *Jezreel*. Which was exactly verified.

This illustrates the Justice of God, & makes it conspicuous
 to every Eye. As Publick Magistrates condemn notorious Cri-
 -minals to be executed at or near the place, where the Fact was
 committed. That the very Place may make the Sin to be the
 better Remembred, & render the Equity of the sentence the
 more manifest & observable.

2 We are to consider those temporal Punishments of sin; which
 flow from the sins themselves. that are either inseparable from, or doe
 commonly attend & follow them. Such as these which follow,

§. 1. *Shame*. As soon as our first Parents had sinned, as if the co-
 -lor of the forbidden fruit had got into their faces, they blush'd &
 were ashamed of their nakedness, & of their folly which brought
 it. And is it not in some measure thus, with their posterity also?
 Such an inseparable *Shame* is the fruit of sin, that hardly any
 man will own himself guilty of the practice of any vice, till he
 hath changed its name: given it an honourable title, & varnish'd
 it with some appellative of vertue: that so *prudence* & *wisdom*,
 thrive

Joseph

1 Kings.
 21. c. v.
 13. v. 19.
 c. 22. v.
 38.

2 Kings.
 9. c. v. 23.

v. 33.
 34. & c.

notorious

ourselves

those

the
colour

*thrift & good husbandry, friendship & good humour, valour
 & generosity, may protect worldliness, covetousness, debau-
 chery, & foolish mirth, & conceal madness, fury, & pride.*
 The like may be said of other faults. If men are surprized
 in some acts of Impiety, what silly excuses will they
 frame? what childish pretences, & frivolous eva-
 sions will they make? what slender shifts & weak apo-
 logies, to justify them selv's, to extenuate, or prevent
 the publication of their folly? *their disordered, & down-
 cast looks, or stupid silence,* make it evident they are asham-
 ed. The shame of being thought guilty makes them shift,
 & turn, & try all methods, to excuse them selv's, or de-
 fend what they have done: & so throw the blame on some
 what else, as on the temperament & constitution of their ^{self}
 bodies which they cannot help, on the importunities of
 their Company which they could not resist, on the temp-
 tations of the Devil; or rather then fail, with Adam,
 they'l charge God himself as accessory to their crimes, and
 reflect upon his holy Providence. Except among a few
 Savages like beasts, there is no nation or people under
 heaven where filthiness, and intemperance, & some grof-
 ser sins, are not reckon'd *shamefull*. The voice of nature
 it self is against such sins, and we thereby violate the mo- ^{thereby}
 desty of our own natures, and offend against an internal
 witness that condemns us. And when once we begin to
 do so, God may leave us to proceed, till we become
publick spectacles of shame to all that know us, and with us

better. There are very few I hope who have sinn'd themselves beyond all shame; tho' more of late then ever, who work all uncleanness with greediness, and glory in their shame. Who boast of that which should cover them with confusion of face; but such have sinn'd themselves within a step of Hell; and being past feeling, are so far past all hope of being reclaim'd. None but such Absolons would commit lewdness on the house top, in the face of the sun, and the view of the world. 'Tis a shame saith the Apostle, to speak of what some men do in secret. I wish such sins were secret still, which were not then so much as to be named among Saints: i. e. not without need, and not without abhorrence. They that are drunk, saith the same Apostle, are drunk in the night. The Heathens themselves never celebrated the feasts of a drunken Bacchus, but by night. So for uncleannes, The eye of the Adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying no eye shall see me, and he disguiseth his face, in the dark they dig thro' houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day time: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. So for murder, and theft and other works of Darkness, to which shame is inseparably annexed. How shamefully are men disfigured by Drunkenness, how do they talk and act like fools, when wine hath fill'd them with more Spirits then they are able to govern? how ill favor'd are their looks? and how ridiculous their carriage? betraying

5 Eph. 3.
2.

1 Thef. 5.
6. 7.

24 Job.
14: 15: 16.

traying that folly in their drunken fits which afterwards they are ashamed to think or speak of, exposing themselves to the *pitty* of their friends & neighbours, to the *contempt* of children, and the *scorn* of their own servants. 'Tis sad to consider how the commonness of this, and other vices hath in great measure taken off the shame of committing it. So that we may ask the question with the Prophet, *Were they ashamed, when they committed all these abominations?* and make the same answer, *No, they were not at all ashamed, neither did they blush.* If ever they reform, and return to God with all their hearts, they will then be heartily ashamed, * when reflecting on their past folly, they shall ask themselves, *what fruit have we of those things wherof we are now ashamed?* But if a timely repentance do not bring them to holy shame and confusion of face before they dye; they shall arise againe to shame and everlasting contempt.

§. 2. The paine, and trouble, and slavery, and sufferings, that wait upon sin, do correct and reprove the sinner. And this will appear if we consider 1. the preparatories to the commission of some crimes. 2. The actual commis- 12 Dan. 2.

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* *E del mio vaneggiar vergogna e'l frutto,
E'l Pentirsi, e'l conoscer chiaramente,
Che que quanto piace al mondo, è breve sogno.*

-sion. 3. The consequent trouble by disaponitment. &c.

1. *The preparations necessary to the commission of some sins.*

They who have had any tolerable education in the knowledge of Christianity under Religious or sober Parents cannot presently adventure upon great Transgressions. They must first stifle their convictions, & debauch their reason, and baffle conscience, and lay aside consideration and serious thoughts, forsake the ministry of the word, neglect the reading of the Bible and other good books, leave off secret prayer, entertain loose company, and admit some principles of *Atheism* or *Saduceism*, before they can dare to adventure. For the debauching of a young man well educated, is not to be done all at once; it is a work of some time, and must be effected by degrees, and many arts of the Devil are requisite in order to it. And after all, t'is with reluctance at first, that they dare do as others, & run into the same excess of riot. And some grosser villanies they boggle at still, and are afraid to proceed. T'is a strange expression of the Psalmist, (7 Psal. 14.) *They Travel with Iniquity, and conceive mischief*: are in as great pain almost as a woman in travell, and all this, *to bring forth a Lye*. The Law of God stares them in the face, and something within tells them. It is better to forbear, and they ought to do otherwise: so that they are not easy, or free from distracting fears, till the way be prepared by lesser sins, and a gradual Apostacy.

2. We may consider *the trouble they meet with in the actual commission of some sins.* Not only as the demands of several lusts are contradictory and inconsistent, and Satan in such a case *must needs cast out Satan*, because all cannot be gratified: but *the very act of some crimes is a down right punishment.* So that with equal reason a man might desire a fever, or choose to be scorcht upon the fire; to quench his thirst with his own sweat. One man eats out his own heart with *Envy and malice*, to see his neighbour prosper: another burns with *impatient lust*, and cannot meet with the opportunity to accomplish his lascivious design. Another is even choakt to death with *thirst for gold*, and yet he labours in the fire, and cannot reach that estate he covets. Or if he do, he is still as far from true content and satisfaction as he was before; yea farther, because his drought increaseth, his fever grows upon him: the more he hath, the more he thinks is necessary to make him happy: like the *horsleech*, he will still be crying, Give, Give, till the disease be cured. Moreover, to bring about a wicked purpose what pains do some men take, to contrive the model, to remove difficulties and objections, to obviate Rivals, and prevent disappointment, surprize, and discovery? what mean things must they stoop to? what base submissions must they undergo? into how many different shapes must they be transformed? and into what an agony do they put themselves? their countenance altered, their eyes fiery, their hands trembling, their breath short,

short, and the whole man, body and soul, in disorder, Whereas it were comparatively very *easy*, & the way plaine, to keep in the path of righteousness, and obey God.

3. We may consider *the consequent trouble upon the immediate commission*. The uneasiness & remorse of a natural conscience, and the frustration of their hopes, the enjoyment falling short of what they promis'd themselves, & eagerly expected. They look't for *pleasure* and they meet with *disquiet*, from the reflexions of their own minds on their disappointment, and a consciousness to themselves that they have not done well. They promised themselves *ease*, and meet with *dissatisfaction*. What they sought for, they do not find; but instead of their expected joy, regret; conscience threatens them with an after reckoning: to stop its mouth, and silence its clamours, they have recourse to company, & fresh pleasures: & being weary of one sort, they must change for another, by various methods endeavoring, tho' in vaine, to appease their bosome enemy. But more of this under *another head*. And is it not a shame, to consider what pains men take to be *undone*, what Gibeonites they are in the *Devil's service*? while we are such *lazy dreamers* in the service of God; whose yoke is *easy*, and whose burden is *light*. What and how many are the cares and fears, and difficulties of the *Proud*, and *Ambitious*? (who perhaps may take it ill I began not with *him* first,) to be filled with the *wind*; and applauded by the people, and honou-
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red in the world? how jealous of every Rival; how watchfull of every advantage; & how diligent to improve, and make the most of it. When the favor of God, that is infinitely preferable, may be had at a cheap rate. Why shall not *we mind the things above*, & our future intrest, with the *same eagerness*, that sinners do the satisfaction of a *sensual lust*? why shall not *we strive* to enter into Heaven, with the *same diligence* as others hasten to the Gates of *Hell*? why shall not *we seek the Kingdom of God*, and its righteousness, with *equal vigor and resolution*, as *they* the injoyment of a *forbidden pleasure*? especially, since instead of paine, and trouble, sorrow & dissatisfaction, which they meet with; *the joy of the Lord would be our strength*, incouragement, and support. For even *in*, as well as *after*, the keeping his commandments, *there is great reward*. His burden would be lighter too, the more we are accustom'd to bear it: & his yoke easier, the longer we have carried it.

§ 3. Sin corrects the sinner in this world, by spoiling that peace, & concord, that love, and unity, among men and Christians, which is necessary to our temporal happiness. Whence come wars fightings, tumults & disorders, animosities & divisions, quarrells & contentions, but from lust in the heart, & the fruits of it in the life? from what other original can we derive the unchristian heats and janglings, strifes and persecutions, among Professors; the uncharitable fewds and hatred among neighbours,

unnecessary & tedious law suits, and the consequent malice and contumelies of vexatious quarrelling, on which the impoverishing of particular persons, and the ruine of whole families, is so often consequent? did we but observe the Christian rules of *Justice*, & *charity*, *meekness*, & *humility*; did we but endeavor, *as much as in us lays to live peaceably with all men*; being kindly affectioned one towards another; apt to be reconciled, and ready to forgive, restraining our exorbitant passions, and interpreting every thing of each other in the best sense; with how different a face would the world appear, how happy would be the nation, the city, the family, where the case were thus. But what contentions and enmities are caused every day by *Pride*, *drunkenness*, & *Evil speaking*? in every town, village, and neighbourhood, we might find Instances. Were it not for the corruption of mankind, and the sad effects of that, there were no foundation in any sense to call *the state of Nature the state of War*. And the peace and harmony, and consequent happiness of the world had not been destroy'd, but by the sin of man. What Nation was ever set on fire within itself or made desolate by a foreign power; what battell was ever fought, (much less a Duel,) what war was ever commenc'd or prosecuted, but on one side or the other or both, *Ambition*, or *Pride*, *Rashness*, or *Rebellion*, *Fury*, or *Revenge* was at the bottom? hence they spring as from their grand source, by these were they cherish'd as

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by their proper fuel : the great convulsions & desolations that tear *Provinces & Empires*, and destroy *Kingdoms*, are caused by *armies of Iniquities* rather than of *soldiers*. Discord, contention and war, are the scum of pride. ^{13 Pr. 10.} Whereas, *the meek shall inherit the earth*, and be delighted with *multitudes of Peace*. Among the sinless *Angels*, ^{37 Ec. 11.} there be many *Legions*, we read of no wars. The *Earth* only is the seat of war; *Jerusalem* above is free. If men would cease to do evil, and learn to do well, *Spears* must be turned into *ploughshares*, and *swords* into *pruning hooks*. And the inhabitants of the earth would learn war no more, did they once forbear to be wicked. *Princes* would not then oppress and murder their *Subjects*; nor would *Subjects* rebel against their lawfull *Souveraigns*; a blessed universal peace would return to the earth, which is now so much a stranger to the far greatest part of the inhabited world. So that the *Reproof* and *Correction* of sin thunders in our ears by the noise of canon, and the Instruments of war; is as loud as the beating of *Drums*, and the sound of *trumpets*: it should pierce our hearts, as do the last cries of mangled *soldiers*: and affect us with a like resentment, as do the tragical effects of a desolateing War.

§. 4. Sin doth correct and reprove the sinner in this world, by impoverishing his Estate. Gluttony and Drunkenness, Uncleanliness and Lust, Ambition and Pride, Contentions and Quarrelling, Prodigality, the Gameing humour,

&c. have all a tendency to Poverty, and commonly effect it. If men will sell themselves to commit wickedness, they must sell their estates, to make provision for their lusts.

23 Pr. 21. The Drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and Idleness cloth a man with rags. He that loveth pleasure shall

21 Pr. 17. be poor. And he that loveth wine, & oyl, shall not be rich.
28. c. 19.

And he that follows after vaine persons, shall have poverty enough. Such men are not only unfitted for the works

of their calling, whereby they should subsist; but will pawn all they have, borrow all they can, and sell all they are worth, to maintaine their vices. They mis-

pend their time, and neglect their Employments, which would otherwise find them a lively-hood, and so poverty comes upon them ere they are aware. For no

man resolves from a vast estate to make himself a Beggar; but at the long run how many do so? this needlessexpence is for their honour, or rather pride; and will not undoe them: that is for their pleasure, and diversion; and they think they may bear it, it will not ruine them: and so for others, no one of which alone brings poverty, but al-

together in a little time do it. What large revenues have been wasted in vanity? how many considerable patrimonies devoured by lust? men that had estates left them, almost sufficient to maintaine an army, have been begger'd by a riotous course, and made as indigent as a disbanded foot soldier; reduced to a morsell of bread, and deprived of necessaries, and forc't to depend on those,

who

from poverty
shall come
like an army
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riotous

who were once their dependants. It would be endless to give a bill of all the cost and charges, which some men are at, to maintaine and feed their lusts. How many have been forc't to feed on husks, and ready to starve, as the Prodigal, by following his lustfull and riotous courses. They that have glistered in scarlet, have by this means imbrac't dunghills. Great estates have been turn'd into ^{4 Lam. 5.} sawce, to please a glutton, and he that once far'd deliciously every day, was choice in his dyet, and delicate in his food, and prodigal in his treats and intertainments, is at a losse where to find a dinner. His throat was an open sepulcher, and his houses, lands, and livings, and money too, have been buried in this tomb. So for other sins, the poor and the Deceitfull man shall meet together i: e. the latter be brought as low, as mean, and miserable, and indigent as the former. What the oppressor wrings from the Fatherless and wid- ^{29 Ps 13.} dows, or gets by over reaching his neighbours, thro the ^{through} little arts of cheating, which are called the mysteries of Trade, shall be put into a bag with holes. And methinks ^{1 Hag. 6.} this reproof of sin should be very audible and affecting, that you cannot loos your souls, throw away your hopes of Heaven, and be miserable and undone for ever, but you must part with your money too, and be begger'd here on earth. I might add under this head, that sin doth impoverish the sinner by consuming his precious Time. God gives us other blessings with a larger hand, in a greater

plenty and abundance at once: only our Time he distills by drops; and never gives us two moments at once, but takes away one, when he lends us another. To teach us the price of so rich a Jewel. And what opinion have sick and dyeng persons of the worth and value of their *irrecoverable Time*, which we prodigally consume in sin and folly: in vaine company, and sinfull mirth; in sensual pleasures, and diversions; with the neglect of the great end and business, we ought to prosecute in *this Life*, in order to the felicity of the next. Forgetting that we hasten dayly to *the end of time*, and our *final judgment*, & that wither we sleep or wake; wither we work, or are Idle; wither we prepare for death, and judgment, and our Everlasting state, or do it not; our glass runs, and we are hastning to our last hour. Oh that we would think, with serious *self-Reflexions*, what despairing souls beyond the grave would give for some of that *Time*, we know not what to do with, but spend in vanity, or what is worse! or what we our selves shall ere long be willing to give for a little of it upon the same terms as now, when time is past, and t's too late.

S. 5. *Sin doth correct and reprove the sinner in this Life, by blasting his Reputation.* There must be some appearance at least of *vertue*, and *goodness*, of *justice* and *honesty*, to render any thing *honourable*, and recommend it as *praise worthy*. The grosser acts of *wickedness* are almost every where

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accounted of *ill repute*, hence it is that few arrive to that height of impudence and degeneracy, as to rail and speak evil of others for being *upright* and *religious*, being *honest men* and *good Christians*, but for being *Hypocrites*: for pretending to be what they are *not*: practical religion, and the power of godliness hath still such an *invincible awe* upon the minds of men, and commands that respect and inward *reverence*, which they cannot refuse. So true is it, that *they who honour God, shall be honoured*. And it is equally certaine and univerſal, that *they who deſpiſe and forſake him, ſhall be lightly eſteem'd*. And we find by ^{1 Sam. 2.} experience, that men expoſe themſelv's to contempt, & ^{30.} looſe their reputation by forſakeing God. *Lust* and *Drunkenneſs* cloud the reaſon, and weaken the underſtanding, corrupt the judgment, and deſtroy wiſdom, and render men not only an *abomination* to God, and his holy Angels, but the *contempt* or *pitty* of all wiſe and ſober men. Their vices make them *vile*, Eccliſps the glory of their birth, and the honour which their anceſtors, and families, or their own other good qualities would give them. The name of a *Liar* is a brand of *diſgrace*, and a mark of *diſhonour*, among the worſt of men who often reſent it ſo far, as to demand his bloud for reparation of the *affront*, who preſumed to call them ſo. Sin, ſayth a late Author, as ſome beaſts, hath a ſtinking breath, as well as deadly claws, and brings infamy and diſgrace, as well as paine and trouble. If men degrade themſelves into
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lascivious wine by Intemperance, or into goats by lasciviousness & lust, they must not expect the reward of vertue, to be well reputed, and spoken of. If they are *slaves* to an Imperious lust, they must bear the *Infamy* of being so. And no better are they in the practice of Impiety: for as *Slaves* are at the command of their Masters, and blindly obey their wills, and are no gainers by what they do, and oftentimes feel the lash and the whip, notwithstanding their drudgery; such is the case of sinners, under the power of a domineering vice. Yea their service is more dirty, and dishonourable, their chains stronger, and their recovery more difficult, as being less apprehensive & sensible of their thralldom. And who can honour or esteem such voluntary slaves, under the worst of Tyrants? they render themselves infamous & despicable; & can not expect better then to be scorned, or pittied. No man will esteem or trust one that is a known drunkard, and whoremaster: a frugal honest man that hath but half the estate, is better lov'd, & will be farther trusted, then such a one, tho' he have twice as much. Who can think or speak well of a drunkard any otherwise then of a cask or vessell to be often filled and emptied. As of one that is a confident boaster of himself, his own actions & undertakings: a slanderer & backbiter of others; one that is vaine and scandalous in company, foolishly babling all he knows, unfaithfully revealing the secrets of his friends, rash and hasty in his resolutions; extravagant in his projects, irregular in

his

his actions; &c. And what reputation can such a man expect? the like I might say of the *Glutton*, who spends his Life in carrying meat from the *Table* to the *Dung-hill*; and so of others. *The name of such men shall rot*, saith the wise man. It shall putrefie as soon as their bodies, and sometimes long before. Yea some mens wickedness makes them *infamous* after they are dead, kills them to immortality, and poysons their memory to future ages: they stand upon record as great Villains, and warnings to posterity.

§. 6. *Sin corrects and reproveth the sinner in this world by destroying his health.* How doth gluttony and drunkenness correct men by evening vomits, and morning qualms, crudities of the stomach, pains of the head, and inflammations of the liver, rheums, gouts, dropsies, cholick, consumptions, apoplexies, palsies, decay of sight, want of appetite, losse of memory, and judgment: stupifying the braine, weakning all the members of the body, and hastening old age and death? How many an healthy constitution hath been destroyed by intemperance? besides that it inflames passion, and excites quarrells, makes men more apt to give affronts, & more unwilling to take them. On which account saith Solomon. *Who hath wo, who hath sorrow, who hath wounds* 23 Pr 29. *without cause? they that tarry long at the wine &c.* who can recount all the mischiefs to the body, by an excess of eating and drinking? whereas abstinence and a tempe-

rate life hath been proved by many to be the certaine cure of catarrhs, and gouts, and other diseases, wherewith formerly they have been tormented. How many miserable instances have we known, of men tor-tur'd by *acute distempers*, swoln with *gouts*, burn't with *feavers*, rackt by the *stone*, torn with *cholicks*, &c. and forc't to pine away a great part of their days in paine & misery, by the effects of Intemperance and lust. By this means *Princes and great men* have been forc't to own, that it is an *evil thing and a bitter*, to forsake God, suffering such torments as the fruit of their Impieties, that have made them envy the condition of *Peasants, Slaves, and Beggars*. How many sacrifice their *health*, and *strength*, to a beastly opportunity, and are punish't by pains of the head; oppressions of the heart; conturbations of the stomach; gripeing of the bowells, continual thirst; unseasonable and unquiet watchfullness; (when nature and digestion require rest.) Besides that *horrible disease* imparted by this vice, the most cruel, the most filthy, the most shamefull of all maladies: (from which no lustfull person can be secure: Because 'tis the nature of vice, and of this in perticular, to precipitate from one degree of excess to another.) A disease which anticipates the corruption and uncleanness of the grave; wherby sinners meet with their *Limbo*, their *Tophet* here, as a sad preface, without repentance to an everlasting Hell.

§. 7. *By an untimely Death.* 'Tis true a natural Death is the fruit of sin, we may consider epidemical diseases, and our common mortality, the trouble of sickness, and the pains of dyeing, as some *correction*, and *reproof of sinners*. Their tears and groans, and ghastly looks in a dyeing hour, their broken sighs, their distorted members, their trembling languishing pulse, their putrid breath, and last agonies, do all bespeak us to consider what *sin* hath done. But a *natural* death being the punishment of the first transgression, and common to all mankind; 'tis an *untimely death*, I am now to speak of.

Without disputeing *wither the period of Life be mutable, or not*, This is certaine, that God from the infinity of his nature must needs be present in all duration at once; and so cannot but foresee and know how long we shall live. And t'is likewise evident from Scripture, reason, and experience, that some do not live ^{55. Ps. 23.} *out half their days*, to which they might have arriv'd according to the cours of nature. The meek, & such as are bl ssed of God, *shall live long to inherit the earth*, but the Transgressors *shall be cutt off*. The fear of the Lord ^{37 Ps. 12.} *prolongeth days*; but the years of the wicked *shall be shortned*. Some think that Balaam when he desired to dye the death ^{10 Ps. 27.} of the Righteous, and that his last end might be like his, meant only the prevention of an *untimely death*, & that ^{23 Numb. 10.} he might goe to his grave in a good old age. And God hath

hath promised, among other temporal blessings, that the good man shall be gathered in peace to his Fathers like a sheaf of corn fully ripe: and crown'd with length of days; as well as with riches and honour. T'is true a short Life, and an hasty death, are not allways a curse, or the fruit of God's displeasure. To a prepared soul, t'is a blessing, and as such more desirable, then to abide in the flesh, in order to our being with Christ, which is best of all. But how many are there whose impieties shorten their days, and * hasten their dissolution. How many dye martyrs by the fire of lust. By the strange woman, many fall down wounded, and many strong men are slain by her. Her house is the way to the grave, & leads to the chambers of death. How many have extinguish't their vital flame, by intemperate drinking, and brought those diseases, or furnish't the matter of them, by excess, wherof in a short time they dyed. Besides the many thousand Murders which drunkenness hath caused: in a drunken fit men have murdered themselv's, their best friends, and dearest Relations. The rise of most duels hath been from hence: the challenge sent from the tavern, or the resolution of fighting commenc't there. Not to mention, what

* *Hinc subitæ mortes, atque intestata senectus,
It nova nec tristis per cunctas fabula cœnas:
Ducitur iratis plaudendum funus amicis.*

Juvenal sat. I.

what every *sessions* and *assize* may inform us, how many expose themself's to the penalty of humane laws by great Transgressions, & perish by the sword of the civil Magistrate. Which may be considered as another instance, whereby Sin doth correct and reprove the Sinner in this world.

§. 8. By *troublesome reflections*, and *horror of Conscience*. Rather then sinners shall escape unpunished, they shall correct themself's: *Conscience* that was privy to their Impieties, & keeps a register of their crimes, & is more then a thousand witnesses, shall accuse, condemn, & torture them, (& that it may be for secret sins, which none of their acquaintance can charge them with,) shall be witness, Judge, and Executioner too, before their irreversible doom at the day of judgment. Hence many are continually haunted by the *Spectres* of their former wickedness; & their own guilty minds frequently check them in their greatest jollity, and make a sad discord in their mirth: so that *in the midst of laughter, their hearts are sorrowfull*. They are always uneasy, and walk in fear, lest vengeance overtake them. As the first Murderer *Cain*, who was afraid of being slain by every man he met, when he was sure to meet with none, but *Brethren & Nephews*. What can we suppose should be able to give such a man courage & support? when he is dejected by his own fears, and cast down by an inward sense of guilt. They must needs have sad hearts, notwithstanding chearfull countenances, from

the biteings of this *Tarantula* within, which no outward applications will cure; any more then an inward bruise may be healed by a plaister upon the outer garment. Yea some from the horror of their own minds, have been ready to make away themself's, and become *their own Executioners*; as if the *Worm*, which never dyes, were more Intolerable then the *fire*, that never goes out. And certainly the most sharp & terrible bodily pains are much inferior to the anguish of an awakened guilty Conscience, under the apprehensions of divine wrath. Did you never hear the outcries of a dyeing sinner, after an impenitent wicked Life, convinc't of sin, & sensible of Eternity, expecting within a few hours to appear before his glorious Judge? When his past Impieties stare him in the face, & Death, and Hell, and Gods Eternal vengeance, are open & naked before him: Despairing now of the mercy of God, which all his Life before he slighted, and cursing those fugitive pleasures, & vaine Companions, that intic't him to mispend his time, & commit folly, and neglect his preparations for another world.

But many sinners feel these rebukes of Conscience in *health*, as well as *sickness*; Terrors possess their guilty minds, & curdle all their delights. They tremble with tormenting fears, which they cannot get rid of: & not taking the right method of cure, they at last sigh away their fainting breath, in *total despair*. In the mean time what arts do they use, to drive away *this evil spirit*, which perpetual-
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ly haunts them? but none of their tryed methods of running to company, & recreations, to drunkenness & riot, &c. have been found effectual for any considerable time. But still they are dogged by their own guilt. In vaine do you think, to laugh & sport & drink away your fears; they will soon return upon you with greater violence, when the company is broken up, & the heat of wine is over: Which like sprightly musick may raise a mans mind for the present, but will leave him more dumpish & melancholy afterward. Yea it makes farther work for Repentance, & so will but augment your terrors. Mirth & pleasure, instead of giving eas to an accusing conscience, will but aggravate and increas your trouble: you will speed no better then the *Philistins* did, when they sent for *Sampson*, to make them sport: who pull'd the house down upon their heads.

Backsliders, of all others, are perticularly reprov'd and corrected by sin, in this instance: how many such have been known, who when they come to themself's, and repent, are even *distracted by the terrors of the Lord*, thro remorse for their *apostacy*? such before Repentance have less pleasure in the commission of sin then others, who never had so much light, or knew so much of the common workings of the Spirit: And afterwards have more terrible apprehensions of God's avenging Justice. Conscience speaks louder in their ears, and the flames of Hell flash oftener in their eyes. So that commonly they doubt, wither

wither God will ever receive them to mercy; and sometimes wither they have not committed *the unpardonable Sin*.

Backsliding Christians, who have formerly rejoyc't in the *light of God's countenance*, and walk't in the *comforts of the holy Ghost*, (while they walk't in their *Integrity*) after the commission of *presumptuous sins*, have dearly experienc't how *evill & bitter a thing it is, to forsake God*. Conscience flies in their faces, being commonly awakened by some *afflicting providence*) and setts their sins, with the *aggravations of them*, in order before them; and *writes bitter things against them*. All their joy is turned to *wormwood*, and their very lives are become a *burden*, and yet they dare not dye. They read their *Inditement*, but cannot see a *pardon*, or scarce entertain any hopes of one. They are covered as with *sackloth*, and lay in the *dust*, bewailing their folly, and confessing their guilt, with broken, bleeding hearts before the Lord. „ Oh „ *vile Apostate* that I am! after such a profession for so „ long a time, after so many convictions of the evill of „ sin, and so much experience of the sweetness and satisfaction of holy walking, thus to forsake my own „ mercies, dishonour my profession, and provoke „ God. *It had been better for me never to have known the way of Righteousness, then after having known, and try'd it, thus shamefully to revolt*. Such a mans sin appears with *horror*, and fills him with *anguish*: so that he

he would give all the world he had not been guilty of that apostacy he repents of. Lord ! *what a wretch , what a fool was I ?* will such a man say , Thus willfully to offend thee , in spite of the clearest knowledg , & the most clearing kindness ? against so many obligations , so many vows , & resolutions , those made upon the most weighty reasons : *what grace , what love , what mercy , have I trampled on , & sinned against ?* whither shall I goe ? what shall I doe ? how dare I appear before that God , on whom I have thus perfidiously turned my back ! how can I ever hope to regain his lost favour ! Against thee only , holy God , have I sinned , & done evill in thy sight. Lord ! I am unworthy to appear in thy presence , I am ashamed & blush to look up to Heaven. How shall I escape thy justice , when I have despis'd thy goodness , & forfeited thy grace ! What can I reply , if thou utterly forsake me , & refuse to be intreated by my prayers , or accept my return ? Eternal wrath is my due , Hell is my deserved portion : & even there may I justly carry the stings of conscience ; even there must I acknowledg I was justly condemned , & punisht ; & own the righteousness of my doom , to unquenchable fire , with my flaming tongue & breath. Wretch that I am , who shall deliver , & save me ! only the mercy of God , in Christ , whose blood , cleanseth from all sin , can possibly relieve the exigence of my case. And wilt thou pity , and pardon , and graciously receive such a rebel ? For Jesus Christ his sake , spare me , & give me repentance ; blot out my transgression , for it is great , and hide thy face from my sin , from my sin , which is ever before me. I cannot avoid the

sight of it; I cannot but remember it, and abhor my self in dust & ashes, & goe mourning all the day long. /

Thes are the thoughts, this is the language of an humble Penitent, under the sens of former backslidings. To this purpose, David tells us in one of his penitentiall Psalms, that *his sin was ever before him*. And in another, *that his sorrow was continually before him*. The one as the 51 Pf. 3. cause, the other as the effect. His sin as the reason of his 38 Pf. 17. sorrow; & his sorrow as the fruit of his sin, was continually before him. This made him cry so earnestly for pardon, *O Lord, blot out my transgressions; and remember not my sinns.* i. e. I remember them, I acknowledg, I humbly confess them, they are ever in my view, & before my face. O do not thou remember them, but cast them behind thy back. On this acount, he complains of broken bones, & a wounded spirit. That the arrows of God stuck fast in his soul, and his hand pressed him sore: that he roared all the day long: & watered his couch with his tears. Thes conflicts and terrors, this darknes & despondency, are the fruit of backsliding, and t'is well if it do not issue in the sin unto death, in final incurable Apostacy. T'is true some who are fallen from so great an heighth, are raised againe: and God upon sincere Repentance will pardon and save returning Backsliders, yet so as by fire, with great difficulty. And they may never recover their former tranquillity and peace, but walk heavily and softly, under doubts and fears, and dejection of spirit, to their dyeing day. And likewise suffer

suffer *smart Afflictions*, to scour off the filth they have contracted by their revolt, and to humble them more deeply under the apprehension of their aggravated guilt. In *thes*, and other such instances, as might be mentioned, *sin doth correct and reprove the sinner in this world.*

What remains, is to consider what *Inferences* of truth & duty, may be collected from the preceding discourse, for our *instruction* and *practise*; or what *improvement* we should make of it. Which I shall dispatch in the following *Propositions*.

§. 1. *That we ought thankfully to admire the wisdom & goodness of God, who hath, in so great measure, connected our present duty & happiness. That we cannot disobey God without injuring our selv's, & feeling the smart of it, even in this Life. Let us thank him for hedging up our way to Eternal death, by the thorns & briars of temporal calamities. By making sin so unreasonable, painfull, shameful, troublesome, & against our Intrest, even on this side the Grave. In so much, that in many instances we can not be undone forever, without being miserable now: nor loos the happiness of the other world, without exposing our selv's to many sorrows, & calamities in this. By our sin & folly we make the Rod which corrects us: our own finger twists the cords, wherby we are rebukt & chastened: the web which insnares & intangles us is spun out of our own bowells. And God in wisdom & kindness so orders it, to prevent our perishing in both worlds.*

§. 2. *We ought heartily to bless God for restraining us, by his grace, & providence, from Presumptuous Crimes.* That he was pleas'd to stop us in our way to ruine, & mercifully prevent us from running into those excesses, which would have been attended with such miserable effects here, & at last have expos'd us to his condemning sentence. Had he not sometimes *withheld* us by his *grace*, when we were tempted: & *prevented* us, at other times, by his *providence*, from divers Temptations, by which others have fallen; we had ere this been deplorable *spectacles* of divine Justice, and severely corrected by our own folly. And this is the favor, which God is pleas'd to vouchsafe to his *Children*, to succor them when they are tempted, & to keep them from such Temptations, as they would not be able to resist. Not that he is a *good man*, who would live wickedly, if he were but tempted to do so, by those ordinary trials that humane nature may expect: but he who prefers God, and the blessedness of the other world, before all things els; & lives agreeable to such a choice; if he so continue shall be saved: tho there might have been supposed a Temptation so strong, as would have conquered his resolutions, with that measure of Grace he then had, if it had not been fortified with new supplies. Therefore thank God for the care of his providence, which secures us from many dangerous Temptations: & for the assistance of his Grace in enabling us to come off with victory, when we have been tryed.

§. 3. *How*

§. 3. *How much better then is a Life of holy Obedience to God, then the practice of sin, if there were no reward to be expected after Death?* If in this Life only we had hope (the case of cruel persecution excepted: such as St. Paul speaks of 1 Cor. 15. And extreme Poverty, & bodily Pains; &c. because under these the hopes of a future blessedness are the chief supports: otherwise) We should be so far from being of all men the most miserable in this world, by obeying the Gospel of Christ; that t'is apparently for our present Interest, to observe the precepts of natural & Christian Religion: the Yoke of Christ is easier, & his burden lighter, & the service of God less difficult, then the drudgery of Sin, with such consequences, as have been mentioned. Let me seriously appeal to your Experience, wither it be not evill & bitter to depart from God, & cast off his fear? have you not found it so, to your cost? have not you your selv's, & many others whom you know, been severely chastened & reprov'd, by sin? & what fruit have you, or they, or what fruit have you ever had, of the sins you are now ashamed of, but such as hath been described? what profit hath he, saith the Wiseman, who hath labor'd for the Ecl. 16. wind?

Bring in your accounts of what you have ever got by a wicked Live: & compare it with the present reward of holy liveing. Set down your income, & proceed to a reckoning, & see what the total summe amounts to. So much Shame & Fear; so much Care & Trouble; so much

Losse & Damage; so much Ignominy & Disgrace; so much Disquiet & Dissatisfaction; so much Discredit & Disparagement; so many Frustrations & Disappointments; so many Difficulties & perplexities; so many Diseases, Grievs, & Aches. An ill name, an empty purse, a decayed Fortune, a distempered Body, a guilty accusing Conscience, &c. And all this for a little sensuall mirth & pleasure, for wine, & women, for a feather, a fancy, an humour, a lust. * Wheras if you would seriously return to God, & walk humbly, & circumspectly before him, you will quickly be able joyfully to relate from your own Experience, the contrary fruit of holy Obedience. Remember therefore the vinegar, and the Gall of former sins, and return no more to folly. Especially considering that,

§ 4. *If sin do thus correct the sinner in this Life, how much more severely will it do so in the next? If the consequences of sin in this world, are oftentimes so dreadful, how much more intolerable will they be in that which is to come? never did any sinner without Repentance escape the justice of God; but sooner or later his sin did find him out. You cannot swallow poyson, but you will*

** Te miseria, te arumnae premunt omnes, qui te Beatum, qui te florentem putas: Tuae libidines te torquent, tu dies noctesque cruciaris. Te conscientiae stimulant maleficiorum tuorum, te metus exanimant judiciorum, atque legum quocunque aspexisti, ut furiae; sic tuae tibi occurrunt incuria, quae te respirare non sinunt — Cicero.*

will feel the effects of it. Even those sins you now justify & glory in, shall be your Everlasting punishment. Tho you should not be scourged & chastened in this world, as many others are. Conscience that is now asleep, will ere long awake to purpose; & be faithfull to its office when the most stinging apprehensions of your own guilt, shall vex & torture your Souls, with a fruitless remorse for past folly, & remediless despair under an intolerable wrath.

All those inquiries, which you designedly forget, are written down in God's book of Remembrance. And the day is hastening when a strict Reckoning will be demanded; & justice impartially executed, on those who will not now believe a future Judgment; & on those who live, as if they did not expect it.

It is obseruable in the word of God, or may be infer'd from thence, to the glory of divine justice, that in the proceedings of the last day, God will suit & proportion the future punishment of flagitious men, to their present sin.

Every vice shall have its proper torment: & the miseries which now correct men, as the Beginning of Hell, shall be then consummate. Is not the Disorder & Confusion, the Everlasting Pain & shame of Hell, begun to be inflicted on sinners in this Life? some impieties are now troublesome & painfull, the full wages will be exquisite & intolerable anguish. As there is nothing more loath

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some then some crimes; there shall be stench in the lake of Brimstone here after. Sinners are now in slavery to their lusts, & led Captive by the Devil; & in the prison of Hell, there are chains of Everlasting Darknes. They shall reap as they sowed; & every man receive according to his works. God's Eternal curse shall be the portion of the Impious swearer, & Blasphemer. Outer Darknes is reserved for the willfull despisers of natural, & Euangelicall Light. The Atheists heart shall tremble under the vengeance of that God whose being & authority he denied. The Glutton's teeth shall gnash; The Lascivious & unclean be tormented in unquenchable flames, & vainly sigh for a drop of water to cool their tongues.

As they who were usefull in the world, & did good to others, shall shine as stars in glory; the malicious, spitefull, & Envious, shall gnaw their own bowells. As the Lovers of Peace, shall see the God of Peace, & be blessed; Furious, Passionate, Angry, Turbulent sinners shall rave & roar for ever under the wrath of God. As the mercifull shall find mercy; the Covetons, & uncharitable shall remember their lost opportunites of doing good, with extreme regret; & the thoughts of their unimployed Riches be as Thorns in their sides. As the meek & Humble shall be exalted; The proud shall be covered with Shame: & thrown down to the bottom of contempt. As the Diligent soul shall be rewarded with a glorious recompence; the slothfull shall lament their stupid negligence; in trifling away

away their precious *seasons*, without a possibility of retrieving them. As holy *Mourners* shall then be comforted; the merry *Jovial sinner*, who now laughs at serious piety, & derides Religion as a melancholy humour, shall weep & wail, for ever. Every impenitent sinner shall after Death be condemned to a state of unspeakable misery: not only far beyond the present punishments of sin; but infinitely above all we can now apprehend or fear; to continue as long as God & Heaven indure. i. e. it shall be without the least hope of an intermission or Period. And *this* without unfeigned Repentance, you will find to your cost, when 't is too late, to be no groundless fancy, or melancholy *Dream*, no *politick device*, or fine contrivance to keep the world in awe; but the words of soberness, & the certain truth of God. Therefore

§. 5 *This may abundantly convince us of the great absurdity & sottishness of most sinners, in the prosecution of their Lusts.* Who turn the deaf ear to all the loud reproofs & smart corrections of their own Sin. Tho God hath made the wages of Iniquity to be troublesome & afflictive in this world, as well as threatned eternal sorrows to the Impenitent hereafter; tho some crimes do not only merit punishment, at the hands of Justice, but *infect* it; yet foolish sinners court their own misery, with the refusal of Happiness. They will feed upon husks, when Manna is offer'd them: they forsake the *Fountain of liveing Waters*, to purchase a *Feaver*: they neglect an Everlasting

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Heaven, in the other world, for the Beginnings of *Hell*, in this. They forfeit & relinquish the favor of God, and peace of conscience, & eternal Life, for the imbraces of an Harlot, for unjust gaine, for Drunkenness & Riot, & such like follies, with the afflictive consequences that attend them in this Life.

As if *Paine* were preferable to *ease*, & *disquiet* to *satisfaction*, & *contentment*: as if *Trouble* were better than *Peace*: & *Poverty* than *Riches*. As if *sickness* were more desirable than *health*; & *Disappointment* than *Certainty*: and the horror & anguish of an *accusing Conscience*, then *calmness* & *serenity of mind*. As if a *long and happy Life*, with the Love of God, and the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the joyfull prospect of a future blessedness after this Life is ended, were less eligible than a *miserable, shamefull, and untimely Death*. Is it like *Men*, who have rational Souls, to make such a choice? But t' is more foolish and unreasonable, if you are considered as *professing Christians*; to betray your *God* for a *lust*; your *Redeemer*, with all the purchase of his death, for *Paine*, and *Shame* and loos your immortal Souls, redeemed by his precious *Bloud*, not for *nothing* only, but for what is *worse*: and in order to be miserable *for ever*, choos to be so *for the present*. Can you look upon *Sin* with all thes *disadvantages*; and hath it, can it possibly have, any *beauty* to intice & charm you? But you will object, it may be, that many who live in *Sin*, do not meet with thes mischeivous effects & consequences,

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upon the account wherof I would dissuade you from it. Therefore

§. 6. *We ought to consider that 't is very consistent with the Justice of God, & reconcileable to his wisdom, that all wicked men should not equally receive the correction & punishment of Sin in this world.* Many men may so far bridle their lusts, or enjoy the pleasures of Sin with so much craft & cunning, as to escape many of those rebukes & smart corrections, which others meet with. We have Instances of some who spend their days in Pride, & Cruelty, Lust, & Luxury, & Rebellion against God, & yet leave this world without any remarkable stroke of his anger & Justice: to the wonder, & *stumbling* of Divers who observe it.

In all Ages this hath been a difficult objection against the Providence of God; & urged on all occasions by *Atheists* & *Sadducees* in favor of their cause against the Worshipers of God. And 't is more easy of the two, to give sufficient reasons of the persecutions & sufferings of good men, then to solve the Impunity & Prosperity of the Wicked. But neither can be done with clearness & satisfaction, without the belief of a *Future Judgment*; & both of thes are argumentative in their kind to persuade that Belief. David himself was puzzled for a time with this mystery of Divine Providence: till he went into the sanctuary, & seriously considered the latter end of Sinners. And then he exclaims against himself, & cries out of his folly, *How foolish was I & ignorant: I was as a Beast before thee.* For the

21 Job
7: 8.
& seqq.

12 Jer. 1.

73 Ps. 22.

Consideration of another Life, & a Judgment to come will abundantly satisfy us of the reasons of divine Patience & long-suffering for the present. ; Why Sentence against Evil doers is not speedily executed, or not at all in this world. They are condemned by the holy Law of God, & bound over to his final Judgment; & tho the Execution be delayed for a while, they cannot escape the hand of Justice, since God is Omnipresent, Almighty, & lives for ever. And how short is the time of God's forbearance in this Life, if compared with an endless duration of misery after the judgment day. We have little reason to envy them their present Prosperity, when we consider that the day of Execution is appointed, & that they are hastening to it; for *their Judgment doth not linger, & their Damnation slumbereth not*, saith the *Apostle*. The honour of God's Justice will then be more publicly vindicated, & more openly manifest to all the world, then it could be by the present punishment of all great offenders. It will not be long ere they feel the dismal effects of that Almighty vengeance they now deride; see the *Heaven* they have lost and scorned; & suffer those intolerable & remediless torments which they will not now believe or consider. In the mean time they are not all of them altogether unpunisht in this world, but feel the lashes of their own guilty self-condemning thoughts, by inward horror & anxiety of minde, & continual fears of divine Justice: Which all their outward prosperity cannot remedy, any more than musick

can cure the stone or Gout, or a Crown of gold give ease to the headach. And the very fears of an after reckoning are a mighty check & restraint upon those, who are above the controul of humane laws, & have power to defend & justifie their crimes. The world would be fill'd with cruelty & blood, & mankind be destroyed by the Lusts of Tyrants, & great Oppressors, were they not in some measure restrained by the fears of a future Judgment, & punishments in another Life.

Some such it may be are spared, in order to their Repentance & Amendment; for some Persecutors, & Blasphemers, & notorious Criminals have been called to Repentance; & afterwards have been instrumental to glorifie that God, whom before they affronted & provok't. Or it may be God forbears them, as the Executioners of his wrath upon others, as the scourges of the world, to punish the wickedness of other men. And when they have done his work, they shall be seiz'd by his Justice, & their latter end be as exemplary & remarkable, as were their * Impieties. Of this Instances may be given in the Roman Emperors, & others. For of nineteen or twenty Emperors, that pass'd between Antoninus the Phylosopher, & Claudius the second, not one of them escap't a violent Death. Moreover, God

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may

* *Jam non ad culmina Rerum,
Injustè crevisse queror; tolluntur in altum,
Ut lapsu graviore ruant.*

Claudian.

may design to instruct us in our duty by his own Example, to teach us by his infinite condescension & patience toward those who provoke him, how to exercise meekness & forbearance one toward another. It being impossible any injury we receive from our fellow-creatures should ever be heightned to such a guilt, as our sins against God are clothed with. But whatever be the reason of *Divine Patience*, it is so far from being an argument against his *Providence*, & a *Future Judgment*, that it may serve to establish both. For *some sinners* are now corrected, and pursu'd by his justice, lest we should question whether he do at all concern himself in the affaires of mankind, or would ever call men to an account for what they do: & all great offenders *are not*, , that there may be room for the exercise of Faith: & that we may the better see the *need* of a *judgment Day*, & believe the *certainty* of it: & that the threatnings of Everlasting miseries may have the more influence & effect upon us; because some in great measure do escape the present punishments of their Impiety. And no wonder if the Providence of God in the distribution of temporal good & Evil be now more dark & intricate then formerly; that we can not so clearly observe his displeasure against the wicked by present punishment, or his approbation of the Righteous by prosperous Events: because we have now less need of such indications of divine favor or wrath: since the extraordinary revelation which he hath made of himself in
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the holy Scriptures, especially in the new Testament, whereby we have a much clearer light to guide us & a fuller & more manifest assurance of Eternal Rewards & Punishments. But because ordinarily men are chastened, & corrected by their wickedness in this world. Therefore

§. 7. *Let us resolve to avoid Sin, as ever we would avoid being miserable in both worlds.* The number is not great of those who abhor *Evill* by contemplating it merely in the abstract; or choos piety by viewing in only in a Metaphysical dresse. *Holiness*, 't is true, should be lov'd for it self, as the image of God, the most Excellent & most perfect Being: & *Sin* hated for its own intrinsick Malignity, the Deformity, & *Evill* of its nature. But while we dwell in bodies; present sufferings, & temporall calamities will very much affect us: & as they are the usuall consequents of Sin, may be likely to dissuade us from it. Let us therefore *gather grapes from the thorns, & figs from the thistles, & turn the stones into Bread*, by learning to be wise at a cheaper rate then others. Let the Justice of God upon them be mercy to us, for our Instruction & Warning: that we may not be corrected & reprov'd by our own folly.

Because some have been impious without feeling all those miserable effects, or but very few of them; shall we therefore run the hazard? will we swallow a cup of poison, when we are foretold of the fatal consequence, because some have done so unawares & escap't with their lives? Because some have been in a tempest, and not drown'd; would we choos to adventure our selv's in a storm? will any Wiseman rush upon the point of a sword, because it may possibly miss his heart, & not mortally wound him? whereas in case, if it should not, yet the wound, will cost him dear by Repentance; and the dearer still, the longer he delays the remedy.

1 Prov.
10: 15.
4. c. 15.
5. c. 4.
7, 8, 9,
10, 11.

Be persuaded therefore to receive instruction, before you taste the bitter fruit of your own folly: & do not purchase *Everlasting sorrows* at the price of *Temporal*. Be not such Enemies to your self's, & to your own intrest, as to run the hazard of being calamitous & afflicted now, to secure thereby irrecoverable perdition hereafter. But if Sinners intice thee consent thou not, walk not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path. Avoid it, passe not by it, turn from it & passe away. For the end will be bitter as wormwood &c. Therefore avoid the occasions of Sin, least thou give thine honour unto others; & thy reproach be not wiped away; least strangers be filled with thy wealth; & thou mourn at the last, when thy Flesh and thy Body are consumed, & say how have I hated Instruction, & my heart despised Reproof. Consider the *Reproof*, and avoid the *Correction of Sin*, which now it gives you; that thes smaller *drops* may not preface a *shower* of vengeance: that your *final ruine* be not the consequent of your incorrigibleness under *present chastisement*: that thes *Temporal Punishments* may not introduce more terrible, insupportable, & endless warb. Especially since our mercifull Saviour hath offered to deliver us from both: from the *Temporal Punishments of Sin*, by our present *Obedience to his holy Gospel*; & from *Everlasting Destruction*, by that *Eternal Salvation*, wherof he is the *Author* to All that obey him, and to none but them.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Besides the literal faults & fals pointings, Page 3. line 3. read often. p. 4. l. 4. for the r. that. l. 24. p. 20. l. 26. r. riotous. p. 36. last line r. with.



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